

## CONTROVERSIAL.

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

The Editors reserve the right to erase all improper personalities and objectionable expressions found in any article accepted for this department; and they alone shall be the judges.

## Eating in the Temple of Idols.

BY ELIJAH BERKEY.

"For meat destroy not the works of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense."—Rom. 14:20.

In the above the Apostle tries to convey to our minds the propriety of maintaining weaker brethren who have not the knowledge of distinguishing right from wrong in the eating of meats in an idol's temple.

The eating in sacrifice to idols is wrong, yet the apostle saw nothing wrong in eating to satisfy his appetite; but thinking that the weak brother might not have the same knowledge, he would eat the meat as a sacrifice offered unto idols, which would be an offence. This gives rise to the following language. "Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." Now there was no other cause to bring forth this language of the apostle than to show to us the propriety of not partaking of anything wherein is idolatry, as we have no other God but one. So far as the strong are concerned, they are at liberty, but on account of the weak this liberty is taken away, and only because there is danger of causing others to offend by partaking of things offered in an idol's temple, and as appearing in idol worship.

This has nothing to do in confirming the various hallucinations, which have been afloat concerning other individual matters where the gospel is entirely silent. Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind. I ask who shall be his brother's keeper, to hold preeminence and lord it over God's heritage. These are things God has reserved to himself, and every man shall stand or fall on his own merits at the last day.

The above passage has frequently been quoted in our presence to substantiate those predominant principles regardless of the circumstances in connection.—Duncansville, Pa.

## Nothing.

BY L. W. FAHRNEY.

We are nothing, we have nothing and we cannot do anything, without the aid and assistance of our all-wise and heavenly Father. The most gifted theologian, the finest orator in the world or the lowest beggar in the streets, is not able by either word, deed or power, to change the position of one star, to cloud the shining of the sun, or to make the moon increase or decrease its brilliancy. Viewed in that light, they are nothing more than sounding brass or tinkling cymbals. Let us leave heavenly bodies alone to God, for in their management we are decidedly nothing.

What is man in the vegetable kingdom? Nothing: nothing more than in the heavenly kingdom. In the little seed is the life germ. What had we to do in putting it there? Nothing. What had we to do with the making of the ground? Nothing. Who had? God. We put the little seed in the earth and then we have implicit confidence in God to cause that seed-germ to show life, and when it does commence to sprout and the plant gets a few inches high, who is able to make the plant grow on? No one but God. If we dig about it and fertilize, and do everything in our power it amounts to nothing, if the increase does not come from God. If we had our way, we would cause trees and plants to grow large in one day; but we have not our way, we must wait, and all we can say or do amounts to nothing.

We can go down deep into the earth and dig for gold, silver and iron; but what had we to do with putting them there? Nothing. What had we to do with the making of the iron and wood that forms our tools, to dig for the metals? Nothing.

And last, but not least, what power had we of ourselves to form the tools? None. God gave us our breath, our body, our minds our power, to make and construct different tools; but we can do nothing except it be given us by God. We brought nothing into this world, and if we live to

be five score years we can take nothing along with us out.

Did you ever think that you were really nothing; and that if there was no higher power than man, that you would eventually be nothing but dust? Oh, it is so strange that we all want to be something when we are really nothing! But if we ever wish to be something, we must live so that when the Messenger of death comes, we can say we are ready to be offered. And then, and not till then,—when the soul germinates,—will we be something.

Let us all strive to be something if we are nothing now.—Boonsboro, Md.

## "Won't You Die Soon?"

"Grandma, won't you die soon?"

"What for, my child?"

"So I can have your gold necklace to wear May-day."

Grandma had promised the little girl that when she died she should have her gold necklace; and so, like many other persons of "great expectations she was awaiting with some impatience the hour when she should receive the coveted possession.

There are many good causes, the prosperity of which is largely dependent on the deaths of those who are interested in them. People hope to do great things for the Lord when they die. They have made their wills, and when they are dead something will be left to do good with.

But what if the multitude whom they might save die before they do? And what if the Lord, whose stewards they are, seeing that they will not do their duty while they live, should cut short their lives, that their talent might be taken from the napkin and put it where it could be of use? A man who proposes to wait until his death before doing the good he thinks it his duty to do, may find that he is in a dangerous position, and that his death is necessary to the accomplishment of the ends which the Lord has in view. The Lord may see that his death is more important to the world than his life, and may say of the fruitless tree, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground." A tree which useless for food may be utilized for fuel; and a man who does no good while alive, may well inquire whether there is any good reason for his continued existence.

It is not well for any man to take such a course in life that his death will be desirable to those who love him best. It is better to do good while we live. "Withhold not that which is in thy hand, while it is in thy power to do it." It is easy to make wills; it is also easy to break them; and no man who makes a will knows whether it will be executed. The man who executes his own will, and does his own work, may accomplish what he desires. Others may leave behind them plans that will fail, and property that may be wasted and squandered, and learn in the judgment day that not only were their lives wrongly planned, but the purpose they intended to achieve after death, have also utterly failed.

There is plenty of work to be done now. Those who are wise will remember the words of the wisest man: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, in the grave where thou goest."

Work, oh work, the night is coming,

Swiftly sinks the setting sun;

Work for eventide is hastening,

Soon shall all thy work be done.

—THE CHRISTIAN.

## Little Sin.

You make light of them now, but they are not to be trifled with; they creep on so stealthily that you scarcely notice them; by and by you will find it impossible to turn them out. I think of the Indian story of the tiny dwarf, who asked the king to give him all the ground he could cover with three strides. The king seeing him so small, said "certainly." Whereupon the dwarf suddenly shot up into a huge giant, covered all the land with the first stride, all the water with the second, and with the third knocked the king down and then took his throne.—THE SUNDAY HOUR.

## Settling a Quarrel.

Children quarrel, and sometimes when older persons have not outgrown their childish faults, they need to be taught as children are taught, to behave themselves and quit their quarreling.

In the year 1805, when Elijah Hedding was preaching in Vermont, a singular instance of this style of discipline occurred. It had relation to two brothers-in-law, who were also connected in family relation with nearly all the members of the society. A dispute concerning some property had existed between them for a long time; and not only continued to increase in violence, but also involved, at length, most of the members of the society. Mr. Hedding collected the society together—some thirty or forty in number—to have the dispute between the men settled. Both of them were fiery, ungovernable men. The object of the meeting was to procure an amicable and brotherly adjustment of the long-pending dispute, or, at least, to devise some method of settlement. Mr. Hedding sat between the two men, and the wife of each sat beside her husband. They began to talk over the subject of dispute, when one of them suddenly warmed up and called the other a liar. Instantly both started to their feet and rushed at each other; the females screamed and a general alarm ensued. Mr. Hedding proved himself equal to the awkward emergency. He rushed between them, seized each by the collar of his coat, and with his herculean frame and strength, held them at arms' length, face to face, but unable to strike each other. They struggled for a moment, but found themselves as though clutched in the jaws of a vise. Holding them at arms' length, commenced to lecture them in round terms; he shamed them about the meanness and wickedness of the act of their unbridled passions had prompted them to commit, in the presence of their wives, their family relations, the religious society of which they were members, their pastor, and especially in the presence of God whose servants they professed to be. He told them of the scandal they had brought upon the church, and the reproach cast upon the cause of God by the course they had pursued toward each other. From the hearing of this entire lecture there was no escape, and they writhed under its withering power.

After they had got somewhat calmed, Mr. Hedding suddenly exclaimed, "Let us pray!" and kneeled down, bringing the two men with him to their knees upon the floor. Still retaining his grasp, he prayed for them in a most fervent and powerful manner. When he had closed, he shook the one he held by his right hand, saying,—"Pray, brother, pray!" Soon he commenced praying and weeping, confessing his sins, and beseeching God and his brother to forgive him. When the first had closed, Mr. Hedding shook the other, and called upon him to pray. He was the most pugnacious of the two; it was hard work for him to clear his throat so as to give utterance to words. "A thousand frogs seemed clogging his speech;" but he at length broke through the difficulty, and earnestly prayed God and his brother to forgive him. When he said "Amen," Mr. Hedding relinquished his grasp, and they all arose to their feet.

"Now shake hands, brethren," said he; "and live as brethren, and love each other as long as you live."

They immediately embraced each other, and almost as quickly settled their dispute; the only difficulty seemed to be in their effort to see which should concede most to his brother. The difficulty was effectually settled. The two men ever after lived on the best terms of fraternal and Christian fellowship.—LIFE OF HEDDING.

Every good affection, every holy action, into which your God may lead you, all your bosom struggles, your hungers and tears and protestants, will be the travailing only of a princely birth and a glorious sonship with God.

Love is on the front of the throne of God, but justice and judgment, with inexorable dread, follow behind; and where law is slighted and mercy despised, when they have rejected those who would be their best friends, then comes justice with her hoodwinked eye, and with the sword and scales.—JAMES A. GARFIELD.